

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTIES OF BLUE EARTH, BROWN,
COTTONWOOD, FARIBAULT, JACKSON,
LINCOLN, LYON, MARTIN, MURRAY, NICOLLET
NOBLES, PIPESTONE, REDWOOD, ROCK, WATONWAN

DISTRICT COURT
FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**DISTRICTWIDE CASE
PROCESSING ORDER**

It is a Strategic Goal of the Minnesota Judicial Branch to promote the effective administration of justice. A priority for this goal is to establish and maintain high-quality, consistent, and convenient court administration services anywhere in the state, through the use of technology, cross-county and district collaborations, and implementation of uniform court business practices. To achieve this goal the Courts have been encouraged to rethink how we have always done business, finding smarter, more efficient ways of doing business, including: regional or central case processing; shifting work across county and district lines; specializing case processing; and reducing the number of things we do differently from courthouse to courthouse. Greater specialization may be more effective, could provide greater job satisfaction, and may improve services to the customers. Regional, cross-county case processing could provide a more consistent experience for customers throughout the district.

In November 2017, the Judicial Council approved the establishment of a Document Acceptance Team in each Judicial District for the purpose of reviewing, classifying, and accepting electronically filed documents, thereby enabling DAT staff to develop expertise in the complex rules that govern document security classification and become more proficient in this important work.

In the furtherance of the effective administration of justice the Fifth Judicial District has implemented districtwide case processing in specific areas, including document acceptance, judgments, and other case types. All districtwide case processing is performed on behalf of all the Court Administrators in

all counties within the Fifth Judicial District, using technology thereby enabling specialization based on case type, improving efficiency, and promoting consistent customer service within the Fifth Judicial District. Document acceptance is processed by District Administration staff under the supervision of the Deputy District Administrator on behalf of all Court Administrators, in all counties within the Fifth Judicial District. All other centralized case processing is performed by Court Administration staff from various counties, assigned to specialized case processing teams, under the supervision of a Court Administrator or Court Operations Supervisor on behalf of all Court Administrators, in all counties within the Fifth Judicial District.

It is recognized that this districtwide case processing structure is not consistent with administrative structure of court administration provided in law and court rule. The case processing duties being performed districtwide by the specialized case processing teams are duties of the court administrator. These duties, as assigned by law and rules of the court, have been performed by deputies of the court administrator in the county for cases venued in that county, under the supervision of the court administrator. The duties of district administrators include the supervision of court administrators, but do not include performing the duties of court administrators (except in the Second and Fourth Judicial Districts in which the district administrator is the court administrator of the county).

The Court Administrators in the Fifth Judicial District are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the majority of the Judges of the Fifth Judicial District. Minn. Const. Art. VI, Sec. 13; Minn. Stat. § 485.01. They have appointed staff necessary to perform the duties of the office of court administrator and are responsible for the acts of those staff. They are the appointing authority of their staff under the Human Resource Rules and the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The Fifth Judicial District Administrator is appointed by the Chief Judge of the District, subject to the approval of the Supreme Court and with the advice of the Judges of the Fifth Judicial District, and serves at the pleasure of the majority of the Judges of the Fifth Judicial District. Minn. Stat. § 484.68, subd. 1. The District Administrator has appointed staff necessary to perform the duties of the office of district

administrator and is responsible for the acts of those staff. The District Administrator is the appointing authority of his staff under the Human Resource Rules.

The purposes of this Order is three-fold: First, to authorize court administration staff from all counties within the Fifth Judicial District assigned to Districtwide case processing teams, to perform case processing duties on behalf of the Court Administrator in each of the counties within the Fifth Judicial District. Second, to authorize district administration staff under the supervision of the District Administrator to perform document acceptance processing on behalf of Court Administrators in each of the counties within the Fifth Judicial District, to enable districtwide case processing. Third, to authorize court administration in all counties to certify case records on behalf of Court Administrators in each of the counties within the Fifth Judicial District. Nothing in this Order is intended to alter either the constitutional and statutory authority of the Court Administrators, to limit the authority of the judges as appointing authorities, or to affect the scope of the judicial district clerical, administrative and technical employees bargaining unit, unless otherwise excluded under Minn. Stat. § 179A.101.

Based on the authority of the Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial District to exercise general supervisory powers over the courts within the Fifth Judicial District, including supervision of the administrative operations of the courts, Minn. Stat. § 484.69, subd. 3 (2018).

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED

1. Court administration staff assigned to Districtwide case processing teams are authorized to perform case processing duties of court administrators, on behalf of all of the Court Administrators of the Fifth Judicial District, applying applicable statutes, court rules, Judicial Council Policies, State Court Administrator Policies and Procedures, Court Administrative Processes (CAPS) and all other procedural requirements as may be adopted.

2. The Fifth Judicial District Administrator is authorized to supervise districtwide document acceptance performed by all Court Administrators of the Fifth Judicial District. The District Administrator may delegate supervisory duties to the Deputy District Administrator who shall then supervise district and court administration staff assigned to the Document Acceptance Team.
3. The Court Administrators of the Fifth Judicial District and their respective court administration staff are authorized to certify case records from any county within the Fifth Judicial District on behalf of all of the Court Administrators of the Fifth Judicial District.
4. The Court Administrators of the Fifth Judicial District are the appointing authorities of their respective court administration staff assigned to the Districtwide case processing teams. The District Administrator is the appointing authority of his respective district administration staff. Court administration staff assigned to Districtwide case processing teams are included in the judicial district clerical, administrative and technical employees bargaining unit, unless otherwise excluded under Minn. Stat. § 179A.101.
5. The District Administrator and Court Administrators shall work cooperatively in the performance of shared duties.
6. The effectiveness of all districtwide case processing shall be reviewed annually at a Fifth Judicial District Bench meeting designated by the Chief Judge so that judges can provide feedback on the processes to inform decisions on whether processing should continue districtwide in an expanded or restricted fashion.
7. Any districtwide case processing teams or processes, other than those in effect on the date of this Order, must be reviewed and approved by the Chief and Assistant Chief Judge. Proposals for districtwide case processing teams or processes will be submitted to the Fifth District Judges' Executive Committee if the Chief and Assistant Chief Judge deem it appropriate to do so. Likewise, districtwide case processing proposals will be submitted to the full Fifth District bench for consideration if the Executive Committee deems it appropriate.

8. All proposed districtwide case processing procedures shall be provided to the Chief and Assistant Chief Judge for review at least 30 days prior to implementation. The proposed procedures shall also be reviewed by SCAO Legal and/or other personnel at SCAO to ensure compliance with all laws, rules, regulations, and Branch policies and procedures. Districtwide processing shall not commence until the procedures have been reviewed and approved for compliance.
9. This order supersedes the districtwide case processing order signed June 30, 2021.
10. This order shall be filed with the Court Administrator in each county in the Fifth Judicial District.

BY ORDER OF THE COURT:

Hon. Gregory J. Anderson
Chief Judge
Fifth Judicial District

Dated:
